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Intended to provide concrete ways for parents to help children become readers and writers, this easy-to-read, illustrated booklet uses the everyday routines that parents follow with their children--bathing and dressing, eating, shopping, doing household chores--to demonstrate how to build vocabulary, learn about conversations, and discover meaning from the written word. Rather than using workbooks and special games, the booklet explains the value of everyday talking, singing, and reading to children. Guidance is provided by age group: baby, toddler, preschool, and kindergarten. The booklet also includes lists of books to read for each age group. (EV)

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Reading Right From the Start

What Parents Can Do in the First Five Years

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Toni S. Bickart
Diane Trister Dodge

Illustrated by
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TEACHING STRATEGIES
Washington, DC

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Introduction

Are you the parent, relative, or caregiver of a baby, toddler, or preschooler? Do you want your child to

- enjoy reading books?
- speak well?
- write clearly?
- love learning?
- succeed in school?

The time to start is right now. Children begin learning about reading and writing, about words and print long before they go to school. And what you do and say can give your child a great start.

The early years are important learning years. This is when your child learns to talk and understand words. Children who know lots of words and enjoy listening to books become better readers. You can help them learn. And here's the good part. You don't have to buy special games or toys. It's what you do every day that matters.

This book shows you how to help your child become a good reader and writer. Children who speak, read, and write well are more likely to do well in school. You will see how much you already

do. You will learn new ideas you can try. Because you know your child best, you can choose the ideas you and your child will enjoy the most. Help your child get a good start on reading—it can be fun for both of you.

Give Your Baby a Good Start

It's hard to believe that what you do with your baby can help him become a reader years from now. But, what you do makes a difference—a big difference.

Think about what your baby has to do before he can walk. First, he learns to hold his head up, then he turns over. Later he sits up. Soon you find him crawling, pulling up on furniture, and then one day he walks. It seems to happen overnight, but it really took about a year for him to be ready.

Now think about what your baby has to do in order to be ready to learn to read. First of all, he needs to know many words and what they mean. Children who know and use lots of words have an easier time learning to read. Believe it or not, your baby begins to learn about words as soon as he is born. He hears your voice, coos and babbles, and begins to say and understand words. You can encourage him by talking—and after a little bit—by reading to him. Like learning to walk, enjoying books seems to happen overnight, but it really takes time.

Talk to Your Baby

As ten-month-old Anthony plays on the kitchen floor with pots and pans, he points to the stove where his mother is stirring a pot. He says "Da? Da?" His mother answers, "Yes, Anthony, the stove is hot, hot. Don't touch it. Hot, hot."

How does a baby learn to talk? We don't set out to teach our children to talk. We just talk to them! When your daughter coos, you smile and talk back. When she babbles and makes sounds, you may answer as if she asked you a real question. It is so important for your baby to get a response from you. This is the beginning of conversation! So even though you may think your baby doesn't understand what you say, keep on talking!

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You can talk about what you are doing, "I'm washing the dishes now" or "It's time to get dressed." It's hearing the sounds in words that are important. Your baby gets used to hearing your language, even before she knows what the words mean. Babies can't learn to have conversations with a TV. No one talks back to them. While your baby may seem to like the TV, it's not a good way to learn language. When your child is older, some TV shows can help you teach your child. But right now, your baby needs you to talk to her.

If you speak more than one language in your home you may wonder what language your child should learn. The answer is that family members should speak whatever language they speak best. Young children who hear two languages spoken well from birth can learn them both.

Sing to Your Baby

Six-month-old Samantha is having her diaper changed. Her mother holds her feet in the air singing, "Sammy's feet are in the air, in the air, in the air" as Samantha giggles and smiles.

Singing is another way for babies to learn words and the sounds of language. Your baby probably likes to hear you sing—any song as long as it's you singing. Sing to your baby as you hold him. He will feel the movement of your body and hear your voice. Singing songs over and over again gets your baby listening and ready for speaking. Soon he'll try making sounds, like cooing and babbling. In order to read and write, your child has to be able to hear all the small sounds that make up words (sounds like *hap-py, ba-by*). When you sing, your baby hears the sounds of language over and over again.

Read to Your Baby

Should you read to your baby before she can understand the words? Yes! It's never too early to show your baby books and talk about the pictures. Cuddle your baby on your lap and look at books together. Your baby will feel safe and happy. This will teach her that looking at pictures and hearing stories are fun.

Because babies put everything in their mouths, find cloth or vinyl books that can be washed.

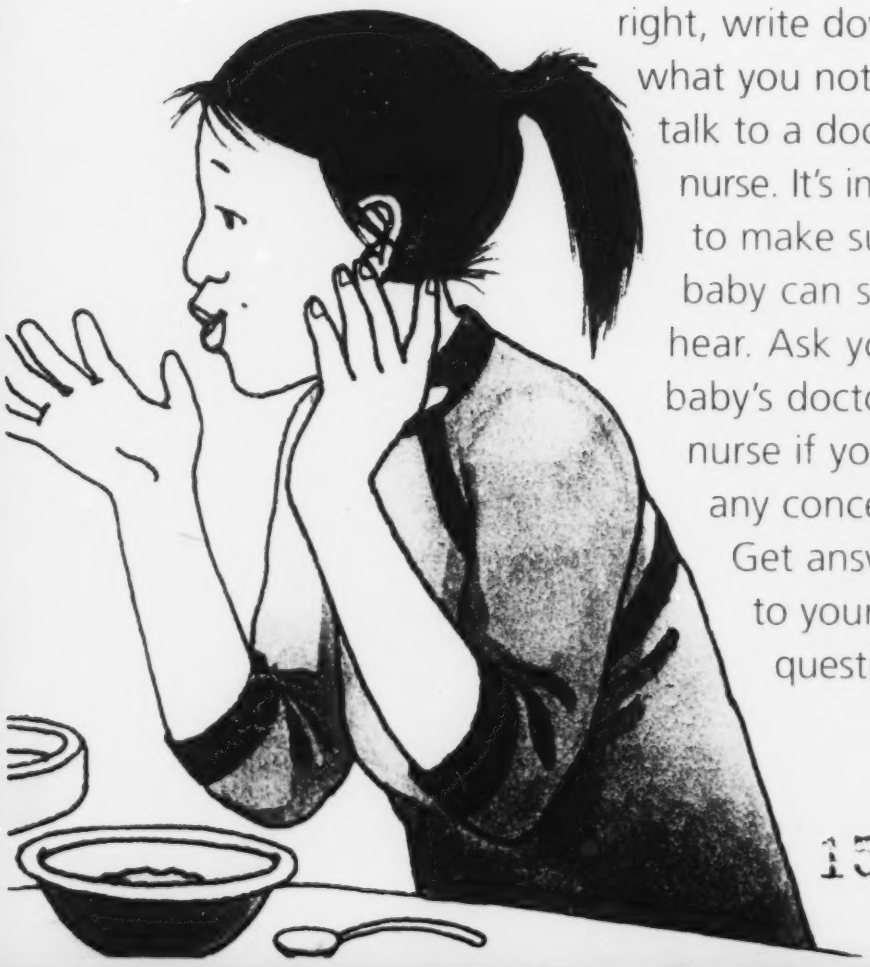
Because babies like to touch what they see, look for cardboard books with bright pictures. Point to the pictures and name what they show. You can ask, "Where's the baby?" so your baby begins to point to the pictures. When she can, let your older baby turn the pages. Do this a few times every day—just a few minutes at a time, as long as your baby is interested.

Your Baby Learns All Day Long

From birth, your baby has been learning about the world. As he explores, he makes discoveries. He *listens* for the special sounds of your voice, *looks* at things around him, and *touches* anything he can reach. You can talk about your baby's new skills—"Rashid, you pushed the hanging toy and made it move." Even if your child doesn't understand these words, he can "get the message" from your tone of voice. This teaches your baby that he can make something happen all by himself.

When you play peek-a-boo, your baby learns the fun of hearing words and communicating—you've taught him to play a game. This is what conversation with a baby is all about, learning to do things with another person and taking turns.

What if your baby doesn't like to be held or read to? Some babies do not want to be held. Others may cry a lot and you're not sure why. Or a baby may not look at the person talking or react to loud noises. If you are worried that something does not seem right, write down what you notice and talk to a doctor or nurse. It's important to make sure your baby can see and hear. Ask your baby's doctor or nurse if you have any concerns. Get answers to your questions.



If your baby is in child care, talk with your provider about other activities you can do at home to help your baby learn and grow. You can teach your baby so many things. Talk to your baby about what you do and what you see as you diaper, bathe, feed, and dress your baby. Talk to him as you put him down for a nap or leave him at child care.

When you feed your baby

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR BABY
Hold your baby as you give him a bottle, smile, and talk softly.	Feel secure and loved.
Name each food—"applesauce," "cereal," "peas."	Learn new words.
Let your baby hold food with his fingers and hands.	Do things for himself.
Talk about the food—"lumpy cereal" or "orange carrots" or "sweet applesauce."	Begin to understand that words describe how food tastes, looks, smells, and feels.

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When you dress your baby

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR BABY
Hold up each piece of clothing and talk about it.	Learn that all objects have names—diaper, shirt, pants, jacket.
Talk about parts of the body—"This shirt goes over your head" or "Now bend your arm."	Hear the names of parts of the body and other words like "over" and "shirt."
Talk about doing things in order—first the shirt, then the sweater; first socks, then shoes.	Enjoy routines and learn that many things, such as getting dressed, have an order to them.

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When you put your baby down for a nap or at bedtime

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR BABY
Tell a story.	Hear new words and enjoy listening to stories.
Sing a quiet song.	Listen for sounds, hear rhymes.
Hold your baby while you read a book.	Feel safe and happy while looking at books and listening to stories.

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When you diaper or bathe your baby

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR BABY
Name and point to body parts.	Learn new words—leg, arm, head, eyes, nose, mouth.
Talk about what is happening.	Understand actions—lift up, change, all done—and words—wet, dry, poop.
Sing a song, say a nursery rhyme, "Mary had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb..."	Hear the sounds and the rhythm of language.
Play "Where are your toes?" or point and say, "What's this?"	Take turns talking—a conversation.
Cover your face with your hands and say, "Peek-a-boo" when you show your face again.	Play games with words and actions.

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When you say hello or goodbye to your baby

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR BABY
Wave and say "bye-bye."	Connect words and actions.
When you come back say, "Where is my special girl?"	Feel loved and cared for and hear the words that say that feeling.
Sing a special song.	Know what to expect.

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Give Your Toddler a Good Start

Toddlers have lots of energy! They are always on the move, walking, running, and getting into everything.

This is a very good time to help your child learn new words. A child who hears lots of words will soon understand them and want to use them. Children who know and use many words tend to have an easier time learning to read.

Talk with Your Toddler

Eighteen-month-old Alexis is splashing in the bathtub. His dad says, "Keep the water in the tub, not on the floor. See what kind of splash you can make with your hand. Now make a splash with your boat." Alexis splashes away as his father says, "You made a big splash, wow, it was huge! The water got all the way up to your eyes."

Children learn language from being with people who talk with them and listen to them. So turn off the TV and talk together. When your child is banging pots and pans say, "You're making music, you've got the beat." You can also say out loud what you are doing. "Time to get the potatoes out for dinner. Will you get me a potato out of the bag?"

Use as many different words as you can to say the same thing. For example, "That truck is loud—it makes a big noise" or "It's a bright, sunny day." When you say "get away from that" or "don't do that" you don't teach your toddler very much. Instead of just giving orders, you might say, "Don't touch the stove. It's hot. You may burn yourself." Sometimes you want to help your child do something else: "Let's draw a picture. Which markers would you like to use? Here's a red one and here's a blue one."

Toddlers usually begin to talk by pointing to what they want and then trying one or two words at a time, like "juice" or "me up." You can help by giving your child the words to use, "You want apple juice." "Oh, you want me to pick you up?"

Give your toddler simple directions to follow—"Please get a napkin for your sandwich." And when he returns—"Thank you for getting the napkin."

If your toddler seems to be slow at talking, don't be too concerned. Ask yourself: Does my child understand what I say? Does he point to let me know what he wants? This shows your child understands language. Around age two, most children begin connecting words: "Go park," or "Want that."

Because toddlers are on the move, much of your talk is about what they see and do. But you can also help them to use words to tell about their feelings. When your daughter gets angry, let her know you understand, even if you can't do what she

wants. "I know you're angry because you want to stay at the park. It's time to go home. We can come back again." You are teaching her words to describe feelings—words like angry, sad, or happy. If your child is not talking at all by age two, or if you have concerns, check with your doctor.

At this age, TV can play a part in helping your child if you don't overdo it. When you do have the TV on, choose programs that are especially for toddlers like *Barney* and *Mr. Rogers*. These programs move slowly and have lots of colorful pictures, rhymes, finger plays, and songs that help toddlers hear different sounds and learn new words. It's even better if you can watch the program together. Then you can talk about what you both saw and practice the songs and rhymes. Save *Sesame Street* until your child is about three and can follow the quick changes in the program's content.

Sing with Your Toddler

Toddlers love to make music and sing with you. When you sing, your toddler can learn many words—and it's fun even though you may feel silly! You don't have to have a great singing voice—your

toddler doesn't care! Make up songs about the things you and your toddler do every day. You can sing about getting dressed, going to work, or cooking dinner. Pick tunes you know. Use your toddler's name in the song. Clap your hands and dance to the song. Let your child use pots or wooden spoons to make music with you.

Chants and nursery rhymes are like songs. They repeat words and help your child learn about sounds. Think of all the words in this chant:

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Roll it, and prick it, and mark it with a "B"
And put it in the oven for Baby and me!

You can say the letter of your child's name and put it in the oven for him or her!

Think of jump rope rhymes too:

Teddy bear, Teddy bear, turn around
Teddy bear, Teddy bear, touch the ground
Teddy bear, Teddy bear, show your shoe
Teddy bear, Teddy bear, that will do.

If your toddler has a hearing loss he probably has special equipment to help him hear. Feeling the rhythm of your singing can help him with the words. A toddler who cannot see well can enjoy singing more if you ask him to feel objects or use his hands to touch parts of his body that are in the song—head, eyes, elbows, toes.

Read with Your Toddler

Two-year-old Miranda brings some books to her uncle saying, "Read now!" After he reads The Very Hungry Caterpillar *by Eric Carle, she says, "More read, more read." Understanding that she wants to hear the story again, this time he pauses often to let her fill in some of the words she knows come next. Each time the caterpillar finishes eating, her uncle says, "But he was still _____." And Miranda says, "Hungry!" At the end of the second reading, Miranda's uncle says, "Now I think Miranda is hungry. It's time for Miranda to eat."*

Make story time a special part of your daily activities. Toddlers usually like short, simple books. They enjoy books that repeat the same words over and over again. When they hear a favorite story many times they know what comes next. Let your toddler turn the pages and ask, "What's going to happen next?"

Books with words that rhyme are fun too like Tomie de Paola's *Mice Squeak, We Speak*. In *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?* by Dr. Seuss, there are also lots of rhymes. Your active toddler can do all the sound effects—moo like a cow, buzz like a bee, or hoot like an owl.

Think about what books will interest your toddler. Does he or she like books about animals, trucks, cars, fire engines, or airplanes? There are also books about going places like the supermarket, the doctor, or shopping, or books about adventures and make-believe. Pick some books about everyday events that happen in your family.

Visit your local library and ask for help in choosing books for your toddler. Library books are free and it's fun to visit the library. Don't forget to find out if they have a story hour for toddlers.

Find some sturdy, cardboard books that your toddler can handle by himself. Talk about each book—read the title. Ask your toddler to point to pictures as you read—"Where's the cow?" or "Do you see the mice?" Talk about what you see in the pictures. "Look at the big red truck."

Your toddler may not be able to sit still long enough to hear a whole book. But don't worry! Try two or three short reading times during the day. Pick short books or poems. Find the time of day when your child is relaxed and can listen—maybe before bedtime or just after a nap.

Some toddlers have special needs. They may not say many words, have hearing problems, not see well, or have a physical disability. Toddlers with special needs can listen to and enjoy books just like everybody else. It helps to have objects that relate to the book for your child to touch or hold as you read the story. For example, if you are reading *Corduroy*, hold a stuffed bear; if you are reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar,* let your toddler touch some of the food the caterpillar eats—an apple, an orange, cheese, a muffin. And of course, make sure your child is comfortable as he listens.

Write with Your Toddler

In order to make marks with a crayon, marker, or pencil, your toddler needs to develop strong muscles in her fingers and hands. When she puts objects in a container or pegs in a pegboard, squeezes clay or bread dough, those muscles are getting stronger. This helps your child draw and write better.

Two-year-olds love to scribble and make simple pictures. Any kind of paper will do as long as it is big! Show your toddler that you have made a special place for drawing (such as the kitchen table) and teach her not to draw on walls, floors, or furniture. Give your toddler writing and drawing supplies like paper, large crayons, and markers every day.

You don't need to teach your toddler to write or to draw. Let her watch what you do. When you write—letters, shopping lists, things-to-do lists—your toddler may want to "write" her own lists.

Your Toddler Learns All Day Long

When you do things during the day with your toddler and talk about what you are doing, he learns new words. Your toddler will begin to play "make-believe." She will hold a doll and pretend to feed it, just as you fed the baby. Or, he might pretend to talk on the telephone and pass it to you so you can talk too.

A child who makes believe is able to keep a picture of something in his mind. This pretend play is very important for learning to read and other kinds of school learning. It is called *abstract thinking*. Here's

why abstract thinking is necessary. Letters are pictures or symbols that stand for sounds. Sounds are put together to form words. The words we use when we talk and write are names for objects, actions, and feelings. Because reading deals with

symbols and ideas rather than real things, we need abstract thinking skills to make sense of what we read.

So help your child make believe! If your toddler crawls around on the floor barking like a dog, pat him and say, "Hello puppy. What is your name? Do you live here?" If he zooms around the room pretending to be an airplane, play along and say, "Where is this airplane going? Can I come, too?" If you notice your child doesn't seem to play pretend games, you can help get him started. Pretend you have made cookies and offer him some. Pretend to be a waiter and ask what food he wants to eat.

If your toddler is in child care, talk to the teacher about what he or she is interested in at the program. Ask how you can build on those interests.Your toddler can learn a lot at home and by going places with you and doing things. Here are some of the things you can do.

When you prepare food

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR TODDLER
Talk to your toddler as you scrub carrots, wash an apple, or beat eggs together.	Learn new words and develop small muscles necessary for writing.
Give your toddler safe tools to use as you prepare food.	Use kitchen tools—a bowl, beater, wooden spoon, masher—and learn the names of these tools.
Talk about how different foods taste, smell, and feel.	Become aware of different senses and the words to use.
Talk about colors and shapes with your two-year-old: "That's a green apple." "The bread is square."	Learn the names of colors and shapes.

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When you bathe and dress your toddler

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR TODDLER
Talk about how the water feels, what bubbles look like, and how to make splashes.	Begin to use words to describe things.
Encourage your toddler to explore with cups, funnels, measuring spoons, and boats.	Learn to talk about how things work and how things are alike and different.
Ask which shoe your toddler wants to put on first.	Make decisions and talk about shoes and feet.
Let your toddler choose between the red shirt and the blue one.	Learn about colors and get practice choosing.

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When you shop

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR TODDLER
Talk about the food you buy—"What shall we buy for dinner—soup, noodles?"	Learn lots of new words—milk, eggs, chicken, peas.
Talk about what you see —sheets and towels, hammers and nails, stamps and envelopes.	Make connections—the the sheets go on the bed, we hammer nails, we put stamps on our letters.
Look through a magazine or book while waiting in the checkout line.	Know that it's fun to read wherever you are.

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When you take a ride

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR TODDLER
Talk about where you are going and what you will do there.	Learn new words and think about something that will happen in the future.
Sing a song you both know.	Hear familiar words, rhymes.
Talk about what you see along the way—stores, trees, cars, buses.	Notice things and learn to talk about them.
Point out the sounds the car, bus, or train makes.	Hear how words describe sounds.
On your way home, talk about what you did together.	Use words to describe events your child knows about.

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When you walk to the playground or in your neighborhood

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR TODDLER
Collect leaves, seeds, or count cars or trees.	Learn the names of objects and ways to group them.
Talk about the colors or sizes of things you see.	Hear words that describe—big, little, red, green.
Use words that describe what your toddler is doing.	Learn words like run, jump, under, over, around, through.
Say, "The swing goes back and forth, back and forth."	Hear words that tell what's happening.
Make up silly rhymes—"See, see, see the tree. Tree, tree, taller than my knee."	Hear the small sounds in words.

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Give Your Preschooler a Good Start

Think about all the things that children can do when they get to be 3, 4, and 5. They walk quickly, run, climb up and down steps, jump, and ride a tricycle. They can wash their hands, brush their teeth, dress, and undress. They draw simple shapes, build towers with blocks, string beads, and put pegs in a pegboard. They are also getting a start on reading. That's because they are learning a lot about words and stories and writing.

> *Four-year-old Kaitlin is holding a wooden block to her ear and pretending she is talking on the telephone. Her grandmother hands her a pencil and pad and says, "Do you want to write down the message for your Mother?" Kaitlin takes the pencil and writes some of the letters in her name, K T L.*

Many children will try to write letters—starting with the ones in their name. They may make some signs, like STOP or NO. They may read signs they see on the street or the names of stores and restaurants. You may see your child pretend to read a book you have read to her many times.

In the preschool years, children's knowledge and use of language grows and grows. They learn the words to songs, recite rhymes, and do finger plays. They can talk about things that happen to them and they use new words every day.

You can help your preschool child get this good start by continuing to talk together a lot, by singing and playing together, and by reading and writing.

Talk with Your Preschooler

If you listen well, your child will talk more. Why should you talk a lot with your preschooler? This is one way your child learns new words and how to have a conversation. Try to use many different words to say things. On a rainy day, use words like *cloudy, dreary, gray, wet,* and *muddy.*

Listen to and talk with your preschooler as much as you can. Show that you are interested in what he does and what he says. Sometimes it takes a long time for him to find the words to tell a story so be patient. Talk about what you do too. Describe things that you see around you and ask questions about things that interest him—his puppy, his sister, a toy.

You can ask your child—"Tell me about your picture." Talk about things in your house—"Look at all the laundry we have to wash. Can you help me pick out all the dark clothes?" Talk about what you see as you ride home—stores, trees, people, and buses.

Teach your child how to have fun with words. Make up funny rhymes about your names or other things—*Janaye, stay, play; run, fun, sun; apple, papple, dapple*. Many preschoolers love to change words and make or say rhymes. When they do this

they have to listen carefully and repeat the small sounds in words. This helps develop important skills for reading.

Sing with Your Preschooler

You can get your child to sing, march, dance, and make up songs. Make music together by singing, hand clapping, or using a homemade drum. That way your child will learn about sounds and words as you have fun together.

You can sing songs from the radio, songs you learned as a child, songs from movies, or lullabies. Words get repeated often in songs so singing songs is a great way to learn new words and hear rhymes.

Teach your child more chants and nursery rhymes like the ones on page 24. This is one:

Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack
All dressed in black, black, black
With silver buttons, buttons, buttons
All down her back, back, back.
She asked her mother, mother, mother
For 15 cents, cents, cents,

To see the elephants, elephants, elephants
Jump over the fence, fence, fence.

They jumped so high, high, high
They touched the sky, sky, sky
And didn't come back, back, back
'Til the 4th of July, ly, ly.

Here's another:

One, two, buckle my shoe
Three, four shut the door
Five, six pick up sticks
Seven, eight, lay them straight
Nine, ten begin again.

Read with Your Preschooler

Generally, the most important way to prepare your child to be a reader is to read books together **every** day. The more you read, the better. Your preschooler probably enjoys climbing into your lap to listen to a favorite book or story. That's because you have made reading a special time. While you may be tired of reading the same book over and over again, that's just what your child wants—and needs. Repeating the same story helps your child learn.

Books and stories that have rhyme or repeat the same words over and over also help prepare your child for reading. Let your child fill in the missing words you leave out or join in saying the parts that repeat. Soon your preschooler will be able to tell you the story and take turns pretending to read to you.

"Oh-oh! Mud!" read Elena's father from the book We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury. Elena knows the story so well that when he reads, "We can't go over it. We can't go under it," she shouts, "Oh, no! We've got to go through it!"

Many preschoolers are too active to sit still for long. Find some books with pictures that you know your child will like. Maybe he or she would like books about bugs, trucks, helicopters, or snakes. Talk about the pictures for as long as there is interest. Other preschoolers only want books on a special topic or about a special person or animal.

Billy can't sit still for long stories but he likes his mom to read Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? *by Eric Carle because he can name all the colors and pretend to be the animals in the book. He flies like the red bird, quacks like the yellow duck, and barks like the white dog.*

Make book time special. Find a comfortable, quiet place where you can be cozy together and read or talk about a book or story. If you find it helps, practice reading the book to yourself first. Then you can read it to your child with lots of expression. Read to your child in your home language if that's what you speak best.

"On Mondays, Miss Tizzy baked cookies," read Andrew's mother. As he sits on her lap while she reads Miss Tizzy *by Libba Moore Gray, she*

points to the pictures of words Andrew may not understand. That way she doesn't have to stop the story to explain.

As you read, move your finger under the words. This teaches your child that the print stands for words and that we read from the top of the page to the bottom, and from left to right. Talk about what is happening in the story. Connect it to something in your child's life. "Remember when we got our shoes all muddy?" "We go on bus rides too."

A child who learns to love books and stories is more likely to want to read on his own. Take books with you in the car, in a bus, or on the subway, and to the laundromat. Read lots of books—all day long.

Write with Your Preschooler

While toddlers need to be watched during writing and drawing activities, your preschooler may be able to play more independently. Have a box or other place where your child can keep writing and drawing supplies—different kinds of paper, thick and thin markers, crayons, letter stamps, and pencils.

When your preschooler tells you stories, write them down, word for word. Then read them back. This is a wonderful way to show that the words we speak and the words we write are the same. Ask your child to draw pictures that go with the words. Together you have made a book! You can save them. They make a wonderful keepsake or gift for relatives and friends.

Show your child how to write her name. Write simple notes—"I love you" and her name. Before long she may want to write her own notes to you or to friends, grandparents, and neighbors. A picture with her name may be all she makes. If she wants to write more that's fine. Don't worry about whether the letters are made exactly right or whether the spelling is correct. If she wants to know how to form a letter or write a word, show her. Writing, like reading, develops over time. You'll see those early scribbles change to letter-like shapes and then real letters.

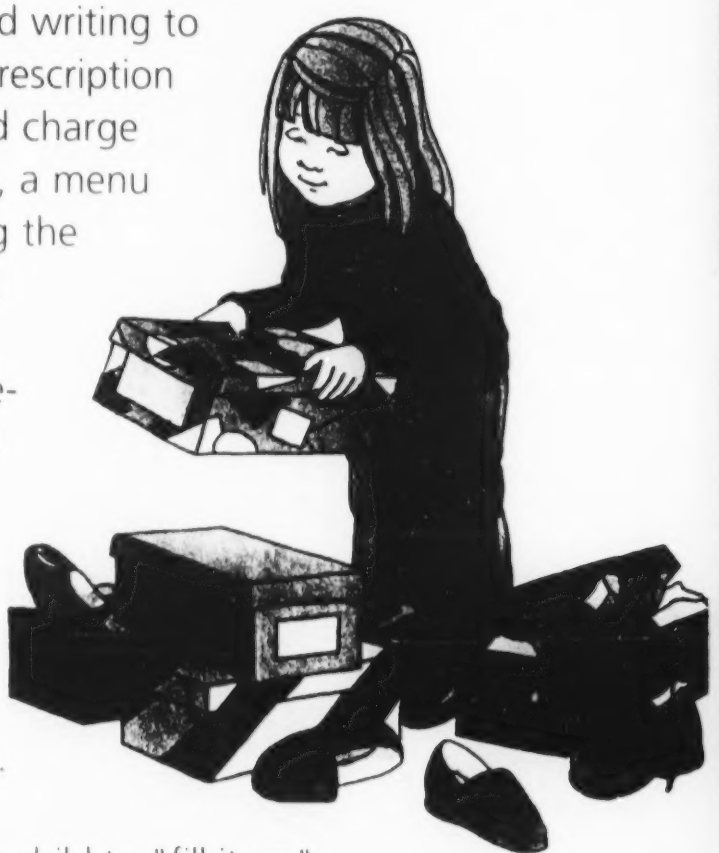
Your Preschooler Learns All Day Long

Preschoolers are learning all the time. That's why you can teach your child so much simply by talking about what you see and do together. Talk about the words and letters you see every day. Help your child learn to name the letters he sees, first in his name, then all around him in print. Point out stop signs, walk signs, exit signs, or signs on stores in your neigborhood. Talk about the name of the cereal he eats and show him the letters that make the name on the box.

If your child is in a preschool program, talk to the teacher about what he or she likes to do there. Ask about special projects and how you can help your child learn at home. If you have any questions about how your child is learning, hearing, or seeing, talk to the teacher and your child's doctor or nurse. Before the meeting, make a list of what you have noticed and your concerns so you remember all of them. Have examples to describe what you mean.

Encourage lots of make-believe games and play. Many preschoolers love to play school, dress up with mom's clothes and shoes, or set up a gas station for cars. They may want to go shopping,

take a doll to the hospital, or go to a restaurant, shoe store, or the post office. Pretend play builds important thinking and language skills that help a child learn to read. Think of ways to add reading and writing to pretend play—a prescription pad, a catalog, old charge cards and receipts, a menu and pad for taking the order. If your child doesn't seem interested in make-believe play, try to help him get started. Pretend you are driving a bus. Ask if he wants a ride. Invite him to drive.



When you ask your child to "fill it up" at his pretend gas station, or you offer some old shoes to play shoe store, you show that you think play is important. You can help your child get a good start on reading in many ways. Think about the things you can do around your home and when you go out together.

When you play together

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR PRESCHOOLER
Put a sock over your hand and pretend to be a puppet character from a story.	Learn to make believe and talk about a story.
Make a photo album of a family trip or party. Ask, "Who was there? What did we do?"	Remember the story that goes with the pictures; learn that events take place in order.
Play board and card games. Read the directions out loud.	Learn about rules. Don't feel you have to follow them exactly.
Join in pretend play—if he's driving the bus, ask for a ride. Talk about where you would like to go.	Use thinking and language skills.

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When you do chores at home

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR PRESCHOOLER
Have your child make a menu with pictures and words.	Connect words with pictures.
Talk about how many bowls to put out for everyone in the family.	Learn numbers, how to count things, and match one-to-one.
Fold napkins in different shapes.	Learn the names of shapes—triangles, squares, rectangles.
Put groceries away and say, "What's in that box? Do we have others like that?"	Learn food names, sort, and put the same ones together. Use pictures to learn about objects.
Find letters from your child's name on food containers.	See and name some letters of the alphabet.

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When you do chores at home, (continued)

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR PRESCHOOLER
Read the recipe. Have your child get the food, measure, stir, and pour.	Learn that reading helps you to know what to do.
Make a shopping list. Say, "Let's think about what we need and write it."	Write for a purpose and learn new words.
Clean the tub, sink, or mirror together. Sing, "Scrub a dub, dub, let's clean the tub."	Learn new words—scrub, polish, shine, brush and hear rhymes.

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When you go out together

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR PRESCHOOLER
At the supermarket, have your child find familiar cereal boxes.	Learn to recognize symbols and read them.
Notice street and store signs and talk about what they say and mean.	Learn about print—STOP, EXIT, WALK, DON'T WALK and what it means.
On the train, look at the map and learn to read the name of your stop.	Connect letters and words with important information.
Talk about the people you see and the kinds of jobs they have.	Build vocabulary and learn about the world.
Talk about the colors and shapes of objects you see.	Learn colors—"The light is red so we can't walk"—and shapes, "See the tiles on the floor, they're squares."

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When you share books and stories

YOU MIGHT	THIS HELPS YOUR PRESCHOOLER
Write a story together.	Connect words and writing.
Talk about why you like a character or how the book makes you think of something you once did.	Make a connection to the stories in books.
Take turns reading or telling a real or pretend story.	Learn how stories work—they have characters, titles, authors, beginnings, middles, and endings.
Have your child choose the book for you to read.	Think about favorite books and make choices.
Read alphabet books and talk about the letters.	See and name the letters in the alphabet.

Ready for Kindergarten

All the talking, singing, reading, and writing you have done together have given your child a good start on reading. By now your child knows and understands many words. She knows how to put words together in sentences that make sense. She listens and follows directions. Besides being able to "read" her name and name the letters in her name, she can write some letters and words. She enjoys books and stories and likes to write on her own.

Hopefully, you have had fun, too. All your efforts have been good for your child and made being a good parent easier. Don't stop what you have been doing now. Your child needs you to continue to read aloud, tell stories, and talk about ideas. He needs to hear and know even more words that he will be trying to read in books. When he talks with you and other adults he learns more words.

Talking with Your Child's Teacher

Show your child's teacher that you care about your child's learning. Find out what books the teacher reads aloud at school. Ask about these and other books that you might read to your child. This shows your child that you know what is going on at school.

Ask what the teacher is doing to help your child learn more about reading and writing. Find out if the children talk about books and stories and which ones your child likes best. Ask what more you can do at home to help your child.

Staying Involved

Children who are successful in school usually have parents who follow their progress closely. Make sure your child knows that you think school is important. Get to know your child's teacher. Visit, if possible. If you can, offer to help out in the classroom to see it with your own eyes. Know about homework and look at your child's work. Talk about how you think learning is important.

Most of all enjoy talking, singing, reading, and writing together. And—if you can find the time, do a little reading for yourself!

Book Lists

These books can be enjoyed by children of all ages. Here are suggestions for a particular age to help you get started. It was hard to choose which ones to include! Look for other books by these authors as well. Talk to your librarian, child care provider, or your child's teacher for even more ideas.

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUR BABY:

Big Fat Hen by Keith Baker
Ten, Nine, Eight by Molly Bang
Play Rhymes by Marc Brown
Tomie DePaola's Mother Goose by Tomie DePaola
Eye Winker, Tom Tinker, Chin Chopper: 50 Musical Finger Plays by Tom Glazer
Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young by Jack Prelutsky
Have You Seen My Duckling? by Nancy Tafuri
My Very First Mother Goose illustrated by Rosemary Wells

ESPECIALLY FOR OLDER BABIES AND TODDLERS:

Moon Bear by Frank Asch
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
Will I Have a Friend? by Miriam Cohen
Where's Spot? by Eric Hill

Rosie's Walk by Pat Hutchins
Mama, Do You Love Me? by Barbara Joosse
Pat the Bunny by Dorothy Kunhardt
Over in the Meadow by John Langstaff
Clap Hands by Helen Oxenbury
Seven Blind Mice by Ed Young
"More, More, More" Said the Baby by Vera Williams

ESPECIALLY FOR OLDER TODDLERS:

The Little Red Hen by Bryon Barton
Barnyard Dance! by Sandra Boynton
Clifford the Big Red Dog by Norman Bridwell
Wait Till the Moon is Full by Margaret Wise Brown
Stellaluna by Jannell Cannon
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
Freight Train by Donald Crews
Corduroy by Don Freeman
Millions of Cats by Wanda Gag
Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper
Pierre: A Cautionary Tale by Maurice Sendak
The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss

Dr. Seuss's ABC: An Amazing Alphabet Book! by Dr. Seuss
Voyage to the Bunny Planet by Rosemary Wells

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears: A West African Tale retold by Verna Aardema
Town Mouse, Country Mouse by Jan Brett
Stone Soup retold by Marcia Brown
Abuela's Weave by Omar Castaneda
Are You My Mother? by P. D. Eastman
The Patchwork Quilt by Valerie R. Flournoy
The Three Bears by Paul Galdone
Bread is for Eating by David and Phyllis Gershator
Miss Tizzy by Libba Moore Gray
She Come Bringing Me that Little Baby Girl by Eloise Greenfield
Is It Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue? An Adventure in Color by Tana Hoban
Two of Everything: A Chinese Folktale retold by Lily Toy Hong
Aunt Flossie's Hats by Elizabeth Fitzgerald Howard
Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson
Whistle for Willie by Ezra Jack Keats
The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf

Little Blue and Little Yellow by Leo Lionni
Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McClosky
Flossie and the Fox by Patricia McKissack
Annie and the Old One by Miska Miles
The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter
When I Was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant
The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by A. Wolf as told to John Scieszka
Chicken Soup with Rice: ***A Book of Months*** by Maurice Sendak
One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish by Dr. Seuss
Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig
Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale by John Steptoe
Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile by Bernard Waber
Yoko by Rosemary Wells
Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China by Ed Young

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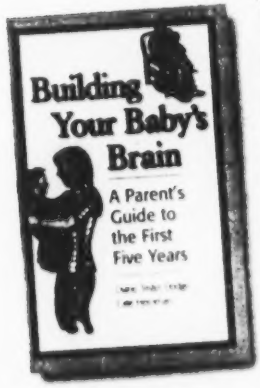
Teaching Strategies, Inc. strives to improve the quality of early childhood programs by producing comprehensive and practical curriculum and training materials. Our products and staff development services are making a difference in preschools, elementary schools, Head Start, school-age programs, and child care programs worldwide.



Building Your Baby's Brain: A Parent's Guide to the First Five Years

It seems that every day there are new research findings and insights into the human brain. This clearly written booklet, packed full of illustrations and helpful charts, explains what scientists know about brain development. It shows how a few simple things parents can do every day can make a big difference.

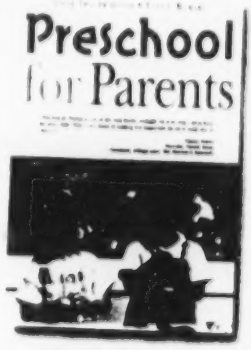
#CB0003, $29.50 for a set of 10.

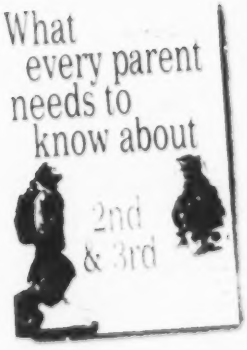
Also available in Spanish: #CB0005, $29.50 for a set of 10

Preschool for Parents

This books shows how to screen and select a high-quality preschool, why "emotional intelligence" may be more important than IQ, how rich play experiences enhance school readiness, and how preschoolers develop reading, writing, math, and science skills.

#CB009, $12.95





What Every Parent Needs to Know About 1st, 2nd & 3rd Grades

Full of real classroom examples, this book illustrates how teachers use their knowledge of child development to make learning interesting and meaningful. Parents learn what to look for in their child's classroom, how to talk with teachers about what their child is learning, and how they can help at home.

#CB0061, $12.95

Order online at our Web site, www.TeachingStrategies.com, or call 800-637-3652 or 202-362-7543

Reading Right From the Start

What Parents Can Do in the First Five Years

Are you looking for concrete ways to help your children become readers and writers? This easy-to-read, richly illustrated booklet uses the everyday routines that you do with your children—bathing and dressing, eating, shopping, household chores, etc.—to demonstrate how to build vocabulary, learn about conversations, and discover meaning from the written word. Research shows that these are the key building blocks for future success as readers and writers. Instead of relying on workbooks, special games, or other gimmicks, *Reading Right from the Start* shows you the value of talking, singing, and reading every day to your child. Included are lists of books to read with your babies, toddlers, or preschoolers.

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